

PROTECTION

Tailor-made to survive a war

AN off-the-peg suit with a difference will be on the market before the end of the year.

There will be little colour choice—all will be dark green or grey with "charcoal" linings.

Not that anyone thinking of wearing the suits will care too much about their appeal to the eye. They are for use in the event of a chemical or nuclear attack and will give the wearer an extra sixty minutes to seek shelter.

The suits will be lighter versions of the Army's N.C.B. (nuclear, chemical and biological) No. 1 Mark 3 issue, but specially designed for Civil Defence wear. They will be available to the general public for about £50 if worn with one's own wellies and washing-up gloves.

"It will give protection from both chemical attack or nuclear flash and fall-out situations for up to an hour," says designer Roy Markwell.

"The suit is a double-skin jacket and trousers, a respirator and canvas-backed rubber gloves—and you can wear your own wellies or buy the special boots.

"Having had a hand in designing the garment to Nato specifications, I felt that a civilian variation should be available.

"The suit will give protection from fall-out, chemical or flash exposure but would become uncomfortable to wear for much more than an hour due to its insulation.

"It gives the wearer fall-out protection up to certain intensities of heat radiation. It will char but not burn and protect the wearer and the clothing worn under the suit."

The suit could be re-used if washed down providing, of course, the wearer had not inhaled any contamination—hence the respirator that comes with the suit.

The Army version specifies twenty-four hours' protection against all known chemical agents, and will last a month under combat conditions.

KEN OSBORN



Dressed up to survive an attack

CLOSE-UP

HOUSEKEEPING

KITCHENS THAT TRIM BILLS

A "silent revolution" in the kitchens of Europe which will cut down heavily on household electricity bills is being planned in the EEC.

According to a Brussels report this week, ever since the war housewives have been paying far too much to run their kitchen equipment.

Now it is estimated that electricity bills for fridges could be cut by 50 per cent, for cookers by 40 per cent and washing machines and dishwashers by 25-30 per cent.

The public was given a chance to look over the type of equipment which will fill the kitchens of the future at an exhibition in Cologne last week.

Among the exhibits was a deep freeze which, by use of better insulation material, is claimed to use 50 per cent less electricity.

The saving is put at about £12 per year—enough for five bottles of Schnapps.

The Germans are also working on a new generation of cheap-to-run, washing machines equipped with "micro chips" which control more exactly the amount of water used and the temperature.

The EEC is spurring firms to greater efforts by its plans for



"Save it" washing machine.

putting labels on household equipment to show how much energy each model uses.

Said a Common Market spokesman yesterday: "These labels are intended to guide customers towards the equipment which uses the least electricity."

"It should be possible by improved design to cut consumption without big price increases."

British housewives can also look forward to cutting costs.

At least one British company, Electrolux, introduced an automatic washing machine—in October last year—which is fitted with a special "save it" economy button. This can save up to 40 per cent on electricity consumption.

The washing time is still the same but the water temperature of the main wash is reduced from 90°C to 60°C.

A range of equipment to be launched by Electrolux in March will save even more energy. A new type of compressor motor will be incorporated into all their 1980 freezers and fridges.

Merchandising manager Geoffrey Jones said yesterday: "The new compressor will save between 15 per cent and 30 per cent on running costs."

"Not only does it lower the energy consumption of a freezer, it also reduces the noise level to a minimum because the compressor is almost free from vibration."

DENNIS NEWSON
SARAH STIDDER

LEGEND

THE traditional image of the Viking as a tall, blond warrior wearing a horned helmet is a myth according to a British Museum exhibition which opens to the public tomorrow.

The Vikings—the Germanic tribesmen from Scandinavia who raided Britain from the 8th to the 9th centuries—did not wear horned helmets.

Their helmets, as shown by one of only two ever found—and which is on show at the British Museum—fitted closely to the head and were made of leather and metal.

They were not a tall race. Leather Norse shoes found on Viking sites in Mork and elsewhere are small—about size seven in modern terms.

If the exhibition disproves the romantic, heroic notion of the Vikings, then it also disproves the other identity that history has bestowed on them—that they were simply cruel barbarians



The Viking myth.

who did little but pillage and rape.

Their elaborately decorated weapons, brooches, tools, ships and tombstones show that they had their own individual and highly-developed art forms.

And they practised Women's Lib long before it was thought of anywhere else.

Viking women were allowed to divorce their husbands whenever they felt like it.

PETER SENN

LEARNING

Switching off the students

PLANS by the BBC to cut its radio and television educational services by as much as 50 per cent, are going to hit young and old alike.

In schools, particularly primary schools, the effect will be close to a disaster. It will seriously disrupt teaching projects in secondary schools, and make life even harder for Open University students who now face increasing fees.

And the cuts will remove hope for illiterate adults who are estimated to number over 2,000,000.

About 91 per cent of all primary and secondary state schools now make use of the BBC schools programmes in their daily timetables—95 per cent of primary and middle schools use the service and 72 per cent of secondaries. The number of

secondary schools tailoring their curricula to the service is rising.

Britain's largest union, the National Union of Teachers, said yesterday: "We are very concerned about the proposed cuts. Our members are already facing massive cuts in books and materials."

"Because of the greater use of audio-visual aids, the BBC programmes form a very important part of the curriculum."

Sunday language clas-



ses of the air face huge cuts, but the worst hit of all will be the programmes designed to teach illiterate adults to read—the BBC is likely to cut out adult literacy programmes altogether.

Ironically, less than two years ago the Government—in opposition—promised a crash "survival programme" for teenage illiterates if it came to power.

CHARLES LYTE
Education

HEALTH

WHIFF OF SAFETY?

BRITAIN'S tobacco barons got a pat on the back yesterday from the top scientists who advise the Government on smoking-and-health matters.

The Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health, in a report to Health Services, congratulates the tobacco firms on almost halving in just over ten years, the levels of tar found in cigarettes made in Britain.

These levels, the report says, have fallen from an average of 31.4 milligrams of tar per cigarette tested in 1965 to 17.4 milligrams per average cigarette in 1977—"notable progress," the experts say.

But the 15 distinguished scientists and doctors headed by Lord Hunter of Newington, want more progress—and fast.

Doctors believe that a major reason for the drop in lung cancer deaths among British men is due to the lower tar-levels.

And the Hunter Committee urges the industry to speed up efforts to put low-tar, lower risk cigarettes on the market.

Vital talks with the Department of Health on tobacco advertising and sponsorship are now taking place and these could be a lever to speed the lower-risk developments.

One member of the Hunter Committee, Dr. Donald Ball, wants tough action now with a timetable attached.

In a minority report, he urges that tar levels be halved again by 1990. "There is 'good evidence', he says, that tobacco-related diseases are now killing 50,000 a year in Britain—two out of five of them being under 65 years of age.

RONALD BEDFORD
Science Editor

"Piles?
They needn't
make you
suffer either"



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